

IMPROVE, DON'T RE-REGULATE OUR NATION'S AVIATION SYSTEM—THESE REMARKS APPEARED AS A "GUEST COLUMN" IN THE ALTOONA MIRROR ON JANUARY 29, 2001

HON. BUD SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 30, 2001

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, at the end of this month, I am retiring from Congress after being fortunate enough to represent the 9th District of Pennsylvania for 28 years, most recently as chairman of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. I am proudest of my efforts to improve the nation's transportation system, especially highways, transit, and airports.

In 1998, I introduced the Transportation, Equity Act for the 21st Century, which guaranteed that revenue from highway users will be used to fund transportation improvements. This landmark legislation, TEA-21, will result in a \$219 billion investment in highway and transit systems by 2003.

And last April, President Clinton signed into law my Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century (AIR-21), which will unlock revenue from taxes on airline tickets to enhance aviation safety and improve infrastructure by providing more money for terminals, gates, taxiways and other improvements. Overall funding for Federal Aviation Administration programs will increase from about \$10 billion in fiscal 2000 to more than \$13 billion annually over the next three years.

However, I believe this bipartisan measure should be regarded as only a first step. The FAA still lacks funding to modernize the air traffic control system, and we remain woefully short of airport capacity to serve the 660 million passengers who fly each year, a number that has more than doubled since 1978.

In recent months, there has been considerable discussion about how consolidation in the airline industry will affect the future of air travel, particularly in the wake of proposed mergers between United Airlines and US Airways, initiated last May, and the American Airlines takeover of TWA, announced this month. In my opinion, much of the concern about these developments is misplaced.

The United-US Airways merger, for example, will create more than 500 new airport-to-airport routes, including 64 new domestic nonstop flights. But more importantly, it will preserve and expand access by US Airways passengers to a convenient, seamless, national and international airline network—the kind of air travel that is essential for companies doing business in today's global economy. Without this merger, US Airways is almost certain to fade away, costing tens of thousands of jobs and reducing air service—especially for smaller cities on less-profitable routes that usually are the first to lose flights and the last to get them back.

Many of the same benefits apply to the American Airlines purchase of TWA, which has lost money for a decade and is now in its third visit to bankruptcy court. American gains a strong hub in St. Louis, allowing it to increase competition by adding capacity. But more significantly, the deal will preserve access to a competitive, comprehensive airline network for the cities now served by TWA.

Certainly, these mergers raise some issues, which are being handled by the Justice Department. United has proposed to increase competitiveness by operating the Boston-New York-Washington shuttle with American. DC Air, the spin-off airline created by the merger, will preserve service from Reagan National Airport to the 43 cities now served by US Airways. In addition, American is buying 49 percent of DC Air (thus giving the new airline access to American's planes, capital and operating expertise), and has agreed to maintain nonstop service on five key hub-to-hub flights where both United and US Airways currently operate for at least 10 years to ensure competition.

I believe Justice is quite capable of ensuring that these mergers will benefit the traveling public. But I think it would be a mistake to re-regulate the airlines, as suggested by some well-meaning lawmakers. The airline industry does not need federally mandated competition "guidelines"—it needs the gates, terminals, runways and traffic control systems that will allow it to grow. Even though many carriers have come and gone in the 20-plus years since airlines were deregulated, average fares have dropped 40 percent in constant dollars—proof of healthy competition in the skies.

Half a century ago, the president and Congress launched what became the world's greatest road network, America's Interstate highway system. I am proud that we have taken steps to preserve that network. And I hope that the new Administration and Congress will make the same effort to enhance our nation's system of air travel.

NEW BEDFORD MAKES PROGRESS ON CLEAN WATER

HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 30, 2001

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, we often hear tales of woe from local officials and it is important that we remain cognizant of these, so that we can act to correct policy mistakes and other circumstances that cause undue stress to the people who have the important job of administering our municipalities. But it is also important to note when as a result of cooperation among the various offices of government, we get something right. I was pleased to receive from the Mayor of New Bedford, MA, Fred Kalisz, an interesting discussion of how cooperation at all three levels has resulted in a policy involving the cleaning of New Bedford Harbor which has had beneficial environmental and economic effects, without having an excessively harsh financial impact on the citizens of that area. I submit the following instructive discussion from Mayor Kalisz into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

[From the City of New Bedford, Office of the Mayor]

THE CITY OF NEW BEDFORD WASTEWATER IMPROVEMENTS FUNDING HISTORY

The City of New Bedford is an old coastal community located on the South Coast of Massachusetts, approximately 50 miles south of Boston. Considered by many as the gateway to Cap Cod, Martha's Vineyard and the Islands.

New Bedford's colorful history is intimately tied to the sea. As one of three deep-

water ports in the State of Massachusetts, and home to the second largest fishing fleet in the country, New Bedford's history, past and future is tied to the sea and the stewardship of its resources.

The City occupies a land area of 19 square miles and has a mean elevation of 50 feet above sea level. Established in 1787, New Bedford was incorporated as a City in 1847.

The New Bedford wastewater collection system was originally constructed in the middle 1800's as a system of sewers that discharged wastewater directly into the City's inner harbor and Clark's Cove. Between 1910 and 1920, the City expanded the system by adding a main interceptor, conveying wastewater through a now abandoned screen house, into an outfall, discharging into Buzzards Bay.

In 1972, the City added a primary treatment facility located on Fort Rodman, at the southern most tip of New Bedford, to provide primary treatment to the outfall discharged to the Bay. In 1986, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (the "EPA") and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts issued joint permits to the City requiring immediate compliance with the secondary wastewater treatment requirements of the Federal Clean Water Act of 1972 (the "CWA") and the Massachusetts Clean Water Act (the "Massachusetts Act").

In 1987, the City entered into a Consent Decree and began implementation of a Capital Improvement Program (CIP designed to comply with regulatory mandates of the CWA and the Massachusetts Act. Capital improvement costs identified by the Decree totaled nearly \$225 million and were projected to increase typical household sewer bills from less than \$70 per year to over \$1000 per household. This court action put the City on schedule to improve its collection and treatment systems through the planning, design, and construction of approved collection and treatment facilities.

The cost of complying with the mandates of the Consent Order represented a major economic and financial burden for the City and its citizens. The City entered into negotiations with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Massachusetts State Revolving Fund. Those negotiations resulted in the Commonwealth agreeing to finance the City's total obligation through the SRF on a subsidized basis, in effect, at a zero percent interest rate. This financial structure enabled the City to move forward.

In total, the City of New Bedford completed twelve major wastewater related infrastructure projects totaling 177 million dollars, to comply with Federal and State clean water mandates ending decades of deferred maintenance and environmental neglect. Today, New Bedford boasts its heritage of the sea with renewed commitment to the stewardship of its resource.

Thousands of acres of shellfish beds, closed for decades, are now open, creating jobs and providing tangible evidence to the success of a community committed to environmental progress.

However, these efforts came at great cost for resident shareholders pressed to afford the resources necessary to end these decades of neglect. To a community that experienced double digit unemployment, and a blue-collar workforce with a median family income of less than \$28,000 per year, New Bedford initiated and raised sewer fees in a depressed economy to support this Herculean effort.

The community viewed original rate projections in the initial phases of the projects timetable with despair. They could ill afford the enormous expense of the commitment before them, help was needed, and New Bedford could not do it alone.

In July of 1988, the City of New Bedford established and adopted the first sewer fee in